

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for offering alternative software, comprising:
 - 2 scanning a computer system of a user to detect software residing on a
 - 3 system of the user;
 - 4 determining an expiration date for software residing on the computer;
 - 5 and
 - 6 offering the user alternative software based on the expiration date of the
 - 7 software.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of monitoring the
 - 2 passage of time until the expiration date and transmitting a message to a
 - 3 software vendor at predetermined time intervals, wherein the software of the
 - 4 user was not authored by the software vendor and is detected by a monitoring
 - 5 program.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of providing the
 - 2 monitoring program on at least one of the computer of the user, a computer
 - 3 network, and a computer of the software vendor.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of scanning the system
 - 2 comprises the step of detecting fee-based software.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising, after the offering step,
 - 2 providing the alternative software to the user in response to receiving an
 - 3 affirmative response from the user.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising, after the offering step,
 - 2 receiving a negative response from the user and renotifying the user of the offer
 - 3 for the alternative software at a specified time interval from the time of the
 - 4 negative response.
- 1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the expiration date is determined by a
 - 2 monitoring program.

- 1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the monitoring program resides on the
2 computer of the user and determines the expiration date by scanning at least
3 one of: the files corresponding to registration of the software by the user, file
4 types associated with software, and an installation date of software.
- 1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step comprises
2 querying the user on the expiration date of software and the offering step is
3 based on a response to the query.
- 1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising, after the offering step,
2 receiving a negative response from the user and renotifying the user of the offer
3 for the alternative software at a specified time interval from the time of the
4 negative response.
- 1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing information detected
2 from the software in a database, and customizing alternative software offers
3 based on the information in the database.
- 1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the offering step comprises offering at
2 least one of replacement software, complementary software, and supplementary
3 software.
- 1 13. The method of claim 11, further comprising detecting software
2 characteristics selected from the group consisting of type of software, file types
3 associated with the software, expiration date, frequency of use, and date of
4 download or installation.
- 1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the offer of alternative software is
2 based on the software characteristics.
- 1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
2 installing a monitoring program on the computer system of the user; and
3 receiving notification of the expiration date of software on the computer
4 system.
- 1 16. A method for detecting fee-based software on a computer of a user and
2 offering alternative software, comprising:

3 using a monitoring program installed on the computer of the user to scan
4 the computer for fee-based software;

5 determining the expiration date of the software based on the software
6 characteristics selected from the group consisting of type of software, files
7 corresponding to registration of the software by the user, file types associated
8 with the software, frequency of use, and date of download or installation; and

9 offering at least one from the group consisting of replacement,
10 complementary, and supplementary software, the offer being based on the
11 software characteristics.

1 17. A system for offering alternative software, comprising:

2 means for scanning a computer system of a user to detect software
3 residing on a system of the user;

4 means for determining an expiration date for software residing on the
5 computer; and

6 means for offering the user alternative software based on the expiration
7 date of the software.

1 18. The system of claim 17, further comprising:

2 a monitoring program for detecting the software of the user; and

3 means for monitoring the passage of time until the expiration date and
4 transmitting a message to a software vendor at predetermined time intervals;

5 wherein the software residing on the computer was not authored by the
6 software vendor.

1 19. The system of claim 18, wherein the monitoring program resides on at
2 least one of the computer of the user, a computer network, and a computer of
3 the software vendor.

1 20. The system of claim 17, wherein the means for scanning the system
2 comprises means for detecting fee-based software.

1 21. The system of claim 17, further comprising means for providing the
2 alternative software to the user in response to an affirmative response from the
3 user.

1 22. The system of claim 17, further comprising means for receiving a
2 negative response from the user and renotifying the user of the offer for the
3 alternative software at a specified time interval from the time of the negative
4 response.

1 23. The system of claim 17, further comprising a monitoring program for
2 determining the expiration date.

1 24. The system of claim 23, wherein the monitoring program resides on the
2 computer of the user and is capable of determining the expiration date by
3 scanning at least one of: the files corresponding to registration of the software
4 by the user, file types associated with software, and an installation date of
5 software.

1 25. The system of claim 17, further comprising means for querying the user
2 on the expiration date of software and the means for offering is adapted to offer
3 alternative software based on a response to the query.

1 26. The system of claim 25, further comprising, means for receiving a
2 negative response and renotifying the user of the offer for the alternative
3 software at a specified time interval from the time of the negative response.

1 27. The system of claim 17, further comprising a database for storing
2 information detected from the software and means for customizing an
3 alternative software offer based on the information in the database.

1 28. The system of claim 27, wherein the alternative software offers is at
2 least one of replacement software, complementary software, and supplementary
3 software.

1 29. The system of claim 27, further comprising means for detecting software
2 characteristics selected from the group consisting of type of software, file types
3 associated with the software, expiration date, frequency of use, and date of
4 download or installation.

1 30. The system of claim 29, further comprising rules for the software
2 characteristics, the rules forming the basis for the offer of alternative software.

1 31. The system of claim 17, further comprising:

2 means for installing a monitoring program on the computer system of
3 the user; and

4 means for receiving notification of the expiration date of software on the
5 computer system.

1 32. A system for detecting fee-based software on a computer of a user and
2 offering alternative software, comprising:

3 means for using a monitoring program installed on the computer of the
4 user to scan the computer for fee-based software;

5 means for determining the expiration date of the software based on the
6 software characteristics selected from the group consisting of type of software,

7 files corresponding to registration of the software by the user, file types
8 associated with the software, frequency of use, and date of download or
9 installation; and

10 means for offering at least one from the group consisting of
11 replacement, complementary, and supplementary software based, the offer
12 being on the software characteristics.

1 33. A computer-readable medium for offering alternative software having
2 computer-executable instructions for performing the steps of:

3 scanning a computer system of a user to detect software residing on a
4 system of the user;

5 determining an expiration date for software residing on the computer;
6 and

7 offering the user alternative software based on the expiration date of the
8 software.

1 34. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, further comprising
2 performing the step of monitoring the passage of time until the expiration date
3 and transmitting a message to a software vendor at predetermined time
4 intervals wherein the software of the user was not authored by the software
5 vendor and is detected by a monitoring program.

1 35. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, further comprising
2 performing the step of providing the monitoring program on at least one of the
3 computer of the user, a computer network, and a computer of the software
4 vendor, wherein the software of the user was not authored by the software
5 vendor.

1 36. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, wherein the step of
2 scanning the system comprises the step of detecting fee-based software.

1 37. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, further comprising, after
2 the offering step, performing the step of providing the alternative software to
3 the user in response to receiving an affirmative response from the user.

1 38. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, further comprising, after
2 the offering step, performing the step of receiving a negative response from the
3 user and renotifying the user of the offer for the alternative software at a
4 specified time interval from the time of the negative response.

1 39. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, wherein the expiration date
2 is determined by a monitoring program.

1 40. The computer-readable medium of claim 39, wherein the monitoring
2 program resides on the computer of the user and determines the expiration date
3 by scanning at least one of: the files corresponding to registration of the
4 software by the user, file types associated with software, and an installation
5 date of software.

- 1 41. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, wherein the determining
2 step comprises querying the user on the expiration date of software, and the
3 offering step is based on a response to the query.
- 1 42. The computer-readable medium of claim 41, further comprising, after
2 the offering step, performing the step of receiving a negative response from the
3 user and renotifying the user of the offer for the alternative software at a
4 specified time interval from the time of the negative response.
- 1 43. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, further comprising
2 performing the steps of storing information detected from the software in a
3 database and customizing alternative software offers based on the information
4 in the database.
- 1 44. The computer-readable medium of claim 43, wherein the offering step
2 comprises offering at least one of replacement software, complementary
3 software, and supplementary software.
- 1 45. The computer-readable medium of claim 43, further comprising
2 performing the step of detecting software characteristics selected from the
3 group consisting of type of software, file types associated with the software,
4 expiration date, frequency of use, and date of download or installation.
- 1 46. The computer-readable medium of claim 45, wherein the offering step is
2 based on the software characteristics.
- 1 47. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, further comprising
2 performing the steps of:
- 3 installing a monitoring program on the computer system of the user; and
4 receiving notification of the expiration date of software on the computer
5 system.
- 1 48. A computer-readable medium for detecting fee-based software on a
2 computer of a user and offering alternative software having computer-
3 executable instructions for performing the steps of:
- 4 using a monitoring program installed on the computer of the user to scan
5 the computer for fee-based software;

6 determining the expiration date of the software based on the software
7 characteristics selected from the group consisting of type of software, files
8 corresponding to registration of the software by the user, file types associated
9 with the software, frequency of use, and date of download or installation; and

10 offering at least one from the group consisting of replacement,
11 complementary, and supplementary software, the offer being based on the
12 software characteristics.